

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Water Resources Division
Water Rights Bureau

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For Routine Actions with Limited Environmental Impact

Part I. Proposed Action Description

1. Applicant/Contact name and address:
River Landing LLC
12140 Gooch Hill Road
Gallatin Gateway, MT 59730
2. Type of action: Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit #30043379-41F
3. Water source name: Groundwater
4. Location affected by project: NESWNWSW, Sec 22, T13S, R4E, Great Bear Minor Subdivision, Lot 4, Gallatin County
5. Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:
The applicant proposes to pump 33 GPM, up to 1.79 acre-feet of water to fill a pond for fire protection, fish, and recreation purposes. This well is located within the Yellowstone Controlled Groundwater Area. The National Park Service was notified. If they do not object and the applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-311 MCA are met, the DNRC shall issue a water use permit.
6. Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:
(include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction)

Montana Natural Heritage Program
Montana State Historic Preservation Office
National Wetlands Inventory – website
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Montana Fisheries Information System

Part II. Environmental Review

1. Environmental Impact Checklist:

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

WATER QUANTITY, QUALITY AND DISTRIBUTION

Water quantity - Assess whether the source of supply is identified as a chronically or periodically dewatered stream by DFWP. Assess whether the proposed use will worsen the already dewatered condition.

Determination: The source of the water is a groundwater well, not on the DFWP list.

Water quality - Assess whether the stream is listed as water quality impaired or threatened by DEQ, and whether the proposed project will affect water quality.

Determination: The source of the water is groundwater, not on the DEQ list

Groundwater - Assess if the proposed project impacts ground water quality or supply. If this is a groundwater appropriation, assess if it could impact adjacent surface water flows.

Determination: The well is 60 feet deep, with gravels, clays, and sand. The requested 33 GPM should have negligible affect on surface water flows in the area.

DIVERSION WORKS - Assess whether the means of diversion, construction and operation of the appropriation works of the proposed project will impact any of the following: channel impacts, flow modifications, barriers, riparian areas, dams, well construction.

Determination: Water will be diverted using a ¾ HP pump. No impact to existing resources

UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Endangered and threatened species - Assess whether the proposed project will impact any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants or aquatic species or any "species of special concern," or create a barrier to the migration or movement of fish or wildlife. For groundwater, assess whether the proposed project, including impacts on adjacent surface flows, would impact any threatened or endangered species or "species of special concern."

Determination: The Montana Natural Heritage Program was contacted. Lynx, grizzly bears, and gray wolves may be found in the area. There should be no significant impact from a groundwater filled pond located in an existing subdivision.

Wetlands - Consult and assess whether the apparent wetland is a functional wetland (according to COE definitions), and whether the wetland resource would be impacted.

Determination: This well was not drilled in a wetland and will have no impact on existing wetlands.

Ponds - For ponds, consult and assess whether existing wildlife, waterfowl, or fisheries resources would be impacted.

Determination: This project does involve a pond. The pond was created for fire protection, fish, and recreation, and may benefit existing wildlife and waterfowl.

GEOLOGY/SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE - *Assess whether there will be degradation of soil quality, alteration of soil stability, or moisture content. Assess whether the soils are heavy in salts that could cause saline seep.*

Determination: This well should not impact soil quality, alter soil stability, or moisture content. There is no saline seep in this area.

VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY/NOXIOUS WEEDS - *Assess impacts to existing vegetative cover. Assess whether the proposed project would result in the establishment or spread of noxious weeds.*

Determination: A small area was disturbed when the well was drilled and pond was developed. The disturbed areas around the well and pond have likely recovered.

AIR QUALITY - *Assess whether there will be a deterioration of air quality or adverse effects on vegetation due to increased air pollutants.*

Determination: There should be no significant impact to air quality from this well

HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES - *Assess whether there will be degradation of unique archeological or historical sites in the vicinity of the proposed project.*

Determination: SHPO has been contacted. They stated that because this pond has already been completed, any cultural properties that may have been in the area have already been impacted.

DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AND ENERGY - *Assess any other impacts on environmental resources of land, water and energy not already addressed.*

Determination: No additional impacts on other environmental resources were identified.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS - *Assess whether the proposed project is inconsistent with any locally adopted environmental plans and goals.*

Determination: The Gallatin County Planning Board has no restrictions against drilling new wells in the area.

ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES - *Assess whether the proposed project will impact access to or the quality of recreational and wilderness activities.*

Determination: This area is private property. No impact is expected.

HUMAN HEALTH - *Assess whether the proposed project impacts on human health.*

Determination: No impact on human health is expected.

PRIVATE PROPERTY - Assess whether there are any government regulatory impacts on private property rights.

Yes___ No **X** If yes, analyze any alternatives considered that could reduce, minimize, or eliminate the regulation of private property rights.

Determination: Private property rights are not impacted by this proposed action.

OTHER HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES - For routine actions of limited environmental impact, the following may be addressed in a checklist fashion.

Impacts on:

- (a) Cultural uniqueness and diversity? No significant impact
- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? No significant impact
- (c) Existing land uses? No significant impact
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? No significant impact
- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? No significant impact
- (f) Demands for government services? No significant impact
- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? No significant impact
- (h) Utilities? No significant impact
- (i) Transportation? No significant impact
- (j) Safety? No significant impact
- (k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances? No significant impact

2. *Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population:*

Secondary Impacts No secondary impacts have been identified

Cumulative Impacts No cumulative impacts have been identified

3. *Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:* Mitigation or stipulations are not planned at this time.

4. *Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative, if an alternative is reasonably available and prudent to*

consider: If the applicant is not allowed to use water from this well, they will not be able to fill the pond designed for fire protection. It may be possible to haul water in.

PART III. Conclusion

1. **Preferred Alternative.** Obtain a water right to be used for domestic purposes.

2 **Comments and Responses**

3. **Finding:**

Yes___ No **X** Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required?

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action: Significant impacts have not been identified. An EIS is not required for this action

Name of person(s) responsible for preparation of EA:

Name: Brooke Nelson

Title: Water Resource Specialist

Date: January 5, 2009